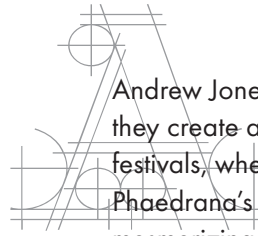


## An Interview with **Andrew “Android” Jones** and **Phaedrana Jones**

By David Jay Brown



Andrew Jones is a digital painter, and Phaedrana Jones is professional dancer. Together they create and perform “live digital paintings” at artistic events, conferences, and festivals, where Andrew’s fluidly flowing, ever-changing digital art is projected on to Phaedrana’s body while she dances. The effect is truly extraordinary and utterly mesmerizing. Together they perform under the name *Phadroid*, and Andrew’s artwork also appears on the back cover of this *Bulletin*. To find out more about their work see: [www.androidjones.com](http://www.androidjones.com) and [www.dreamcatcher.net](http://www.dreamcatcher.net)

**David:** How did you both become interested in art, performance, and creative expression?

*Phaedrana:* In my experience, true creative expression is not a choice but an overpowering inner drive that arises like some invisible golden arrow, which then gradually takes over the course of your life. It’s not that one, say, becomes interested in pursuing it; one day you find it and you literally, or over the course of some time, are “taken” by it. As if a code was playing itself out. The creative path is everyone’s own; when, where, through whom you begin, what holds you back, what shifts the course of your learning, your soul-search, your breakthroughs and challenges. There is no way to compare or determine what the actual path of creative unfolding is or should be.

*There are numerous threads in the story of my life so far that together weave the umbilical cord of the spontaneous creative expression that fascinates me simply because it is beyond my comprehension. It aids my growth as an individual, because it teaches me humility in recognizing that the more I learn to surrender to not knowing (that is, the more faith I have in that which is more than what I know myself to be) the more I may learn about how everything is. I do some of the best work when I have no agenda of my own, when dance dances itself, and I moment by moment become its unfolding, like a 3-dimensional sheet. I would relate the image to standing over a cliff and jumping off into the abyss, knowing that the clouds will be there to cushion the steps underneath your feet.*

*Without a foundation or a grounding, however, we would have no, or only limited, tools to play with. I believe whatever anyone is drawn to from the heart, where one can recognize passion – that’s your tool box. That’s where your work begins. And it takes work. Any basics of any discipline take work. Once you have enough tools to play with though, you can then begin watching your game broadcasted on a screen of its own making.*

*My tools over the years have been widely multidisciplinary, including studies in classical ballet, modern dance, classical south-Indian dance, and anthropology. In some ways this is like speaking multiple languages, or having multiple nationalities, which actually is also the story of my life. By not being bound or locked into only one box, it somehow becomes easier to find the spaces/ourselves in-between the many, where it all happens.*

*I would add that though it immensely aids the creative process to have a number of different tool boxes to juggle, it is only ever possible to give ourselves fully to one arena at a time - or to the integration of them all, which is then its own arena. I am only a student of my process at this point. Though I do believe once we arrive we run out of questions, and have no more doubt clouding our vision.*

**Andrew:** Throughout the course of my entire life, art has been one of the only things that made any sense to me. The creative process has been a refuge for my mind and a meditation for my imagination. Experiences of drawing and painting are among my first memories as a child. I had little interest for anything else, and it became clear to me that the road to my happiness lay in factoring an equation of time/effort that kept me drawing and creating as much as possible.

For a large portion of my journey through life the creative process was executed within a container of solitude. Yet the act of creation, or the moment of the act of creation, is the most exhilarating part of the entire process. A finished painting is only a shadow born from the light of that experience.

I’ve somehow always had a natural inclination to explore the creative process. I would, time and again, gravitate toward expanding my means of expression - such as amplifying creative energies through the use of digital tools.

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When I made the realization that electricity and technology could amplify the power, impact, and exposure of my art, it became a whole new world to explore. Stepping into the realm of performing arts was another such chapter introduced over time.

I was drawn toward the realm of performance art, and that of live painting, because it allowed for a platform where I could share this moment of creation with a larger group of people. I've always liked the fact that the act of making art in front of an audience both demystifies the process at one level and it also earns a level of validation for it. My general intentions for performing in front of people are an attempt to entertain and inspire, and to step into that intangible realm together with them.

**David:** How did you start collaborating together, and what inspired you to combine dance, music, juggling, and motion painting with light?

*Phaedra:* We were inspired by the spirit of Maui (Hawaii), at the festival Source in February 2009. We found ourselves in a giant hall with only a handful of other people simply because everyone else went to sleep! Andrew, as he does, soon embarked on a live painting, projecting onto a large screen halfway through the hall.

*Over the course of the night it so happened that I waltzed over to the side of his illuminated screen to say hi, dancing in and out of his field of vision focused on the projected visuals. Instead of putting his Wacom pen down though, he began to communicate to me through the screen - and I responded. Then something else responded, and the four people*

*who were in the hall at the time stood rooted to the ground. Time stood still. It was as if something had exploded and shot out into a trillion new directions all at once and we were the moment as it all converged. Etched into our minds forever, it was like an invisible conception.*

*Two days later we were invited to perform at the "talent show" of the festival. That was the very first Phadroid performance. Conceived Friday night, rested on Saturday, in the world by Sunday.*

Andrew: Phadroid was born in paradise - in the early morning hours, on a tropical island in the Pacific ocean, perched on a cliff looking over the edge of the world, in a dimly lit gymnasium, to a handful of witnesses in a heightened state of consciousness received from the land. I was making art with my computer and projecting it across the room. As Phaedra crossed the screen and walked into the projector, that rare jewel of a night, I instantaneously knew that something had shifted and would never go back to the way it was before.

It was a timeless moment. And in that moment of frozen time, I could speculate into the quantum field as countless branches of possibilities were being born every millisecond that we connected. It was a moment of exponential branching, occurring spontaneously, the spark of a thousand possibilities converging into that one single segment of time. It was something to be truly grateful for.

**David:** What role have psychedelics played in inspiring your collaborative performance pieces?

Andrew: Psychedelics have been a tool of intentional creative exploration. They are used as a tool because they lend the ability to transport one's awareness into a heightened state of the mind. As the mundane world dissolves, all around one is instantly catapulted into a state of reverence and deep appreciation for all that surrounds one's being. It's a place where nothing merges with everything. When that state is invoked there's nothing any more that I could take for granted. My thought processes seem to organize around a higher order of complexity and understanding. It reminds me of how valuable time is, and it gives me an incredible sense of appreciation for the magic of all things. It takes away the contextualization of how my ego interprets this world as reality, and it strips me of all my conditioning. The more I succeed in shattering my awareness, the more I learn as I am forced to reassemble the pieces. They catalyze my imagination and pull me into a world that I'm accustomed to be pulling from.

Psychedelics open wide the aperture of perception, through which one may observe the beauty of the molecular density of reality. They awaken me into a world of timeless twilight that feels as equally familiar as it is perpetually unfathomable. Like you've been here a thousand times before, but it's unique to the stored memory of your programming. And, with Phaedra, we navigate this unified field of mystery together as a unit. As we synchronize our intentions, we weld our fate together. This core weaves together the fabric of our reality and we do what we can to guide the loom towards a beautiful tapestry.



*Phaedrana: All we do is show up. Somehow, Phadroid appears and moves through us and we partake in the journey. Those witnessing it will naturally be invited to join in the conversation. This is just a different hall of consciousness that we share no matter what. Whatever that is, it is in each one of us, and if we focus in on experiencing that, and nothing else, we invisibly bond - like atoms; hence the collective experience induced that opens people up to themselves. Art at its best is a natural psychedelic.*

*What is Phadroid? What is art? My moves and Andrew's brushstrokes synchronized on the screen do not happen because we "plan" them. We make no plans, we do not "rehearse." They point past us. The living connection of our consciousness through multiple strands of our reality is being woven together - perhaps? Or...are we simply too similar in our sensitivities that we end up magnifying each other's potential, like some transformative-reflective device? In the realm of the medicine we ask no questions. It is all one big answer.*

**David: Phaedra, in general, what sort of relationship do you see between psychedelics and dance?**

*Phaedrana: Dance is medicine, and when we become the dance we become the medicine. This works without psychedelics, though it is similar to the way or the reason many people use psychedelics.*

*I perceive psychedelics as a doorway, like a peeking through so that once you reach there, as a natural state, for an extended moment or longer, you then say to yourself, "Ah, I know this. I recognize this. I've been here before." Your memory then serves as an affirmation. Like remembering a place you saw in a dream,*

*only more real. It is the thin line where the intangible becomes tangibly acknowledged.*

*And it puts one in a place of deep reverence for the overpowering presence of reality that surrounds us at all times. It is also a dialogue if one allows, once we realize that we can also listen. Or it can be a living, breathing prayer. Some refer to meeting points with their higher selves, or the divine realm, in which case it is akin to stepping into your own temple, that is, sacred space.*

*In the right setting, and with the right awareness, they can allow a witnessing of one's purest potential as unnecessary and stagnant boundaries of fear, doubt, insecurity, etc. dissolve away. One might say that which is merely an "illusion" is seen through. As if you could walk through the thick walls of negative experiences, or simply society's or your own expectations/projections, as if those seemingly impenetrable walls were not even there, as if this "potential" was already a living, breathing, tangible realm ever since you were born.*

*It's the trailer of our movie. A pointer reminding us of what is possible, or what is more real, so we begin looking at the ground beneath our feet, elevating it inch by inch, step by step, until one day we naturally arrive at the panorama, and then we can always see the panorama. It is important to never give our power up. Ultimately, we are at all times the masters of our reality.*

*Conscious medicine assists one in sweeping off particles of dust that obscure our sight, or our willingness to own up to what we are able or are called to do. Dusting the slate clean so that nothing but what is essence shines through - it is not in any way personal any more. It reaches out to people directly. Art of any form, that is in any way universal, comes*


*from this "place" and carries the potential to alter an audience's consciousness for a brief period of time or longer, to lift them above the regular ebb and flow of ordinary life, through a temporary suspension of disbelief of the mind.*

*It reminds them of other aspects of themselves that they may not, otherwise, connect with on a regular basis. It works according to its own logic, as any expression of original creativity does. And those involved in making this kind of art do not, ultimately, credit themselves for the products of their creative expression. Expression of this form is its own entity - though as soon as we begin to look for it, it disappears. It doesn't like to be documented either. It can only be experienced, and I am still challenged to believe it, except for when it is actually happening of course.*

**David: Andrew, how have psychedelics influenced the style and content of your paintings, as well as your creative involvement in films, video-games, fashion design, and body painting?**

*Andrew: Throughout human history psychedelics have served as a harbinger of new thoughts, forms and actions. That path led the way to a history of creative breakthroughs that have all had an effect on humanity's evolution. Psychedelics have broadened the aperture of my internal and external vision. They are an inter-dimensional art director that leads me forward from the heart of my humanity through the door to another world that I never knew existed, yet it always feels familiar.*

*The art of psychedelics and technology. As the individual gains a modest amount of perceived control over a particular*

A photograph of a person with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, looking upwards. The background is a dark night sky filled with numerous bright, out-of-focus stars. A prominent light trail, likely from a meteor or satellite, streaks across the upper left portion of the frame. The overall mood is contemplative and awe-inspiring.

The creative process  
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for my mind  
and a meditation  
for my imagination.



software routine or program, there is a memory stored within the muscles and the body of the user. The goal is to gain mastery over at least one particular routine, so the memory of your muscles upon the application becomes the vortex of your consciousness, and also your bread crumb of reality.

All technology is a symphony of code performed by an orchestra of machines, routing a conscious and intentional collective current. Original art is recognized by its tendencies toward unrecognizability – meaning it is a new code being introduced. Art is either fresh code introduced to a new mind, or a new mind introduced to old code.

In a deep journey there is a point of departure where the only things keeping you tethered to the physical world are the creative tools in your hands that you hang onto by your fingertips. The process then transforms into an elusion journey back through your own consciousness. The pen becomes my walking staff and a lightning rod that grounds and focuses on the most creative aspect of my imagination, dissociated from veils of distraction and repetition. It's as if there was an attempt of the tool and my consciousness to merge together. I can tangibly feel the cords interconnecting them as an energy exchange between the logic of the mathematics of the code and my sensitivity. As if I was sensitive to my software to the point of empathy. I can see where, no, I know exactly where it's at and I know exactly how far I can push it before it crashes or I crash. It's like a tightrope between crashing my program and crashing my consciousness.

The metaphorical relationships that I can create to describe the experience is like this. It feels like I'm hunting lions on the edge of a fractal. I'm on Safari in a landscape that's made of pixels, math, and imagination and I'm hunting for combinations of edges, shapes, and colors to carry new codes into the pantheon of art history. Pixel by pixel, bit by bit, from vector to vortex to viral.

Imagine editing along a timeline. If your consciousness exists on a linear timeline at the point of psychedelic departure, you slowly dissolve the connection point. It's like you split the playhead of reality and you become free of time. The road behind you disintegrates into the void, and you're so far out ahead of where you were, that there's nothing in front of you or behind you. You're free. For one moment you're free of all cultural rationality and expectation; you are the thread merging with the loom, weaving a new tapestry of consciousness, clearing a new path into the fractal wave of creative construction. As your comprehension of time deteriorates, the value and respect of the eternal equation that you have always experienced expands. Your perception is the tip of the record's needle spinning forward. Your decisions are derived from a source beyond intuition, and it exceeds my ability to describe it.

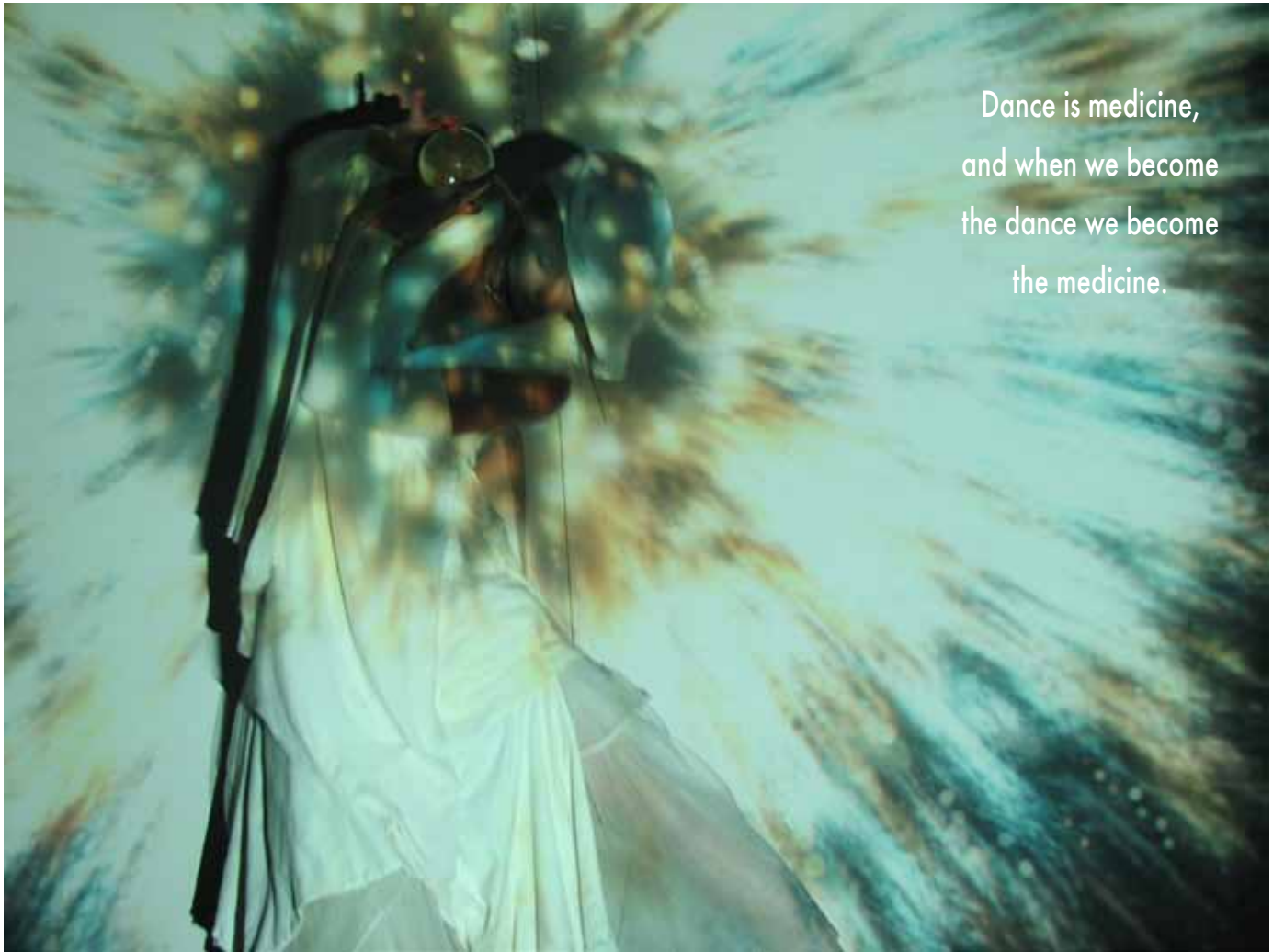
**David: Phaedra, what is going through your mind when you're involved in a dance performance, and Andrew, how do you stay in tune with Phaedra's spontaneous movement?**

*Phaedra: If something is going through my mind while I am performing that means I've fallen out of it all and am probably figuring out how to switch the mind back off (which in*

*itself is paradoxical), so it can, and hopefully does, throw me off to the point that I just give up and then I'm back. It has happened that the external circumstances provided by a particular venue were so completely the opposite of what I had anticipated that my mind short-circuited and showed up as totally blank, to the point that I had no choice but to "just be" in the situation.*

*I could not remember any of what I had done on stage and felt absolutely terrible that I had let everyone down, did not deliver the post – only to find out that the audience was simply blown away, and it made no sense at all though that was exactly why. When sense is placed aside the lid is blown off what may transpire, and it's more than what we could imagine or plan for. It's in those moments that I begin to allow myself to believe that being out of control can be just as much if not more of a blessing than being in control. I, or the "I" that I know, does not "create" magic. It allows magic through. And for that there are no rules to make up prior; it is a state of being where we are of no importance.*

Andrew: I turn on, tune in, and drop into another frequency of love. In essence, I seek to arrive at a state out of mind where my total focus is on our deepest possible connection together. Then I must drop out and allow the environment to dissolve around me. I infuse my consciousness into the dynamic particles of electric light that I wield at will with the integration of a digital drawing tablet and blasting out of the projector onto Phaedra's body and consciousness. Together we are tuned to the same frequency of music, and my imagination cascades across traces of her movement. It is like a techno-digital Tai Chi. There are times when I can feel there is an



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energy between us, and the longer I can hold it the stronger it gets, until I can't take it any more or I lose it or the song changes. Perhaps if art is an expression of one's core being, then this form of artistic union, the ability to create harmoniously in the moment with another, delivers the chemistry between two beings.

**David: What sort of general connection do you both see between psychedelics and the integration of the mind and the body?**

*Phaedrana: In some ways you lose the connection between mind and body, in other words you find it. You are more your "inner" self and you are less the self you "know"- thus you have less control as you know it yet you feel you finally have a clear grasp of how it all just falls into place. At times it feels as if an infinite form of cellular memory got activated, something that's always been there, or as if new blood was flowing through the veins.*

*Psychedelics dissolve the borders of conventional reality generated by the integration of the mind and body at a certain frequency. Due to this shift, it becomes possible to step beyond what we normally perceive as reality, or to see ourselves as separate from events of the past, present, or future, which in turn may "allow" us to detach from them and find new perspectives. And, ultimately, how many bodies do we "have?" How many layers to our mind? What else is working through us that is higher than the mind? Where does the mind end and something else begin? Does the body recognize the soul more than the mind, given that it is more instinctual than intellectual by nature? Is the mind's carefully assembled creation or the body's raw spontaneous expression more real? What is real to begin with?*

Andrew: Sometimes I view the body as the technological intermediary molecular machine that is designed to facilitate the union of psychedelics and consciousness. At peak moments within the experience my consciousness extends beyond the

organic body into the energetic matrix of technology, that of circuits, and electricity - my mind's intention activates its inert potential. As I loosen the grasp on my consciousness, the body can begin to behave automatically, and if I let go at the right time the automation is harmonious.

The repetition programmed into my muscles' memory executes and commands effortlessly as long as I trust it enough to get out of its way - and I have to make sure that everything is plugged in! Its riding the line between a technical experiment and and mystical experience. I merge with the tools that I use to the extent that they feel like a physical extension of myself. The Tablet, the laptop, the software, the circuits, the code, the files, my bones, my blood, and my tears, are all factors within a larger equation. I'm integrated within them; we all make up this mind/body alchemical experiment together. •